

REMARKS

Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of Claim 8, and Claim 8 has been canceled. Claim 9 has also been canceled as inconsistent with the limitations of Claim 1. Thus, claims 1, 3, 4, 6 and 7 are now pending in the present application. Since the patentability of Claim 8 has already been considered, no new issues are raised for the first time after final rejection. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the present rejections in view of the comments presented herein are respectfully requested.

Prior art rejections

Claims 1, 3 and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Chang et al. (US 7,120,342); claims 4 and 6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Chang et al., and further in view of Hiroshi et al. (JP 08-325401, and machine translation thereof; and claim 8 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Chang et al., and further in view of Mauk et al. (US 6,166,094).

As discussed above, Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the features of Claim 8. Accordingly, the rejections over Chang et al. alone or in combination with Hiroshi et al. are no longer applicable to the presently pending claims. Therefore, the rejection over Chang et al. in view of Mauk et al. applicable to Claim 8 will be addressed hereinbelow.

Claim 1 now recites a process of producing a foam sheet comprising forming a foamable composition comprising an acid generator and a polymeric decomposing compound that has a decomposing foamable functional group which is a tert-butyl, tert-butyloxycarbonyl, a keto acid or a keto acid ester group. Although Mauk et al. mentions tert-butyl groups, these are only disclosed in relation to thermoplastic polymers derived from the polymerization of α , β -unsaturated monomers (col. 12, lines 22-24 and 65-66). Accordingly, even if one having skill in the art incorporated a tert-butyl group of Mauk et al. into the disclosure of Chang et al., the present invention would not be achieved.

The recited tert-butyloxycarbonyl group, a keto acid group or keto acid ester groups are not alleged by the Examiner to be obvious in light of the prior art. With respect to the recited tert-butyl group, the presence of such a group results in unexpected properties, which would rebut any *prima facie* showing of obviousness. As described in the specification at page 78, first paragraph:

In Examples 4 to 7, which used a combination of an acid generator and an acrylate decomposing compound having a tert-butyl group, light reflectors were able to be produced having high light reflectance of 80% or more even when in the form of thin films having a thickness of up to 50 µm.

Such high light reflectance in thin films could in no way be predicted by one having ordinary skill in the art, even in view of the cited prior art references. Accordingly, these unexpected results strongly support the nonobviousness of the present claims over the cited references. Thus, claim 1, as well as claims 3, 4, 6, and 7, which depend on claim 1, cannot be obvious over these references.

In view of the amendments and comments presented above, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

CONCLUSION

Applicants submit that all claims are in condition for allowance. However, should there be any questions concerning this application, the Examiner is respectfully invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number appearing below.

Respectfully submitted,

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